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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [UNSC](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: GAZA: SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS TO DISCUSS
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

REF: USUN 63 (NOTAL)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The Security Council held a public debate January 22 on the situation in Gaza. Public statements were delivered by UN U/SYG Lynn Pascoe, all Security Council members, Israel, the Palestinians, neighboring states, the Arab League, OIC, and NAM. Amb Khalilad's intervention expressed concern for the plight of the Gazans, condemned the rocket and mortar attacks, stated that Hamas is responsible for the current situation, and noted that the United States expected Israel to take all possible steps avoid civilian casualties when responding in self defense. Common themes expressed by many delegations in the debate include: concern that the situation in Gaza would undermine the process launched in Annapolis; condemnation of the rocket attacks; opposition to "collective punishment"; and accusations that Israel is deliberately targeting civilians and in violation of international law. Details of the interventions are included in paras 4-6.

¶2. (SBU) Summary, cont'd. Following the public debate, the Security Council met privately to discuss a draft Presidential Statement (PRST) prepared by the Arab group in New York and tabled by Council President Libya. At the beginning of the meeting, Amb Wolff spoke against the idea of a PRST in principle, explaining that the United States did not believe that the Council could reach agreement on the issue in view of the clear divergence of opinions and assessments expressed during the public debate. Thirteen Council members argued that it was important for the Council to issue a statement and expressed a willingness to work from the Libyan draft. Given the interest in a PRST and the willingness to modify the text, Council President Libyan PR Ettalhi scheduled additional consultations of the Security Council on January 23 to consider a revised PRST. End Summary.

Details of Interventions

¶3. (U) A summary of the debate, as well as the full transcript, should be available on the UN website (www.un.org, then click on &press center&) by January 23. USUN has also e-mailed transcripts of the several interventions to IO/UNP and NEA/IPA.

¶4. (U) SECRETARIAT BRIEFING AND PARTIES:

U/SYG PASCOE:

-- Indiscriminate rocket and mortar firing towards civilians is totally unacceptable and UN condemns it unreservedly. UN also concerned about Gilad Shalit and weapons smuggling into

Gaza.

-- Israel must adhere to international law, refrain from disproportionate measures, extra-judicial killings, and should investigate incidents leading to civilian deaths.

-- Israel must reconsider its closure policy. Collective punishment is prohibited under international law. SYG Ban supports Abbas/Fayyad plan for PA to man crossings into Gaza.

-- Events of the past week threaten the Annapolis process.

PA Observer (Riyadh Mansour):

-- Israel actions are immoral and unbearable and have caused a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

-- UNSC should call on Israel to stop all acts of violence and terror, lift siege, provide immediate humanitarian access to Gaza, and hold Israel accountable to international law.

-- PA ready to operate all crossings into Gaza per plan proposed through Quartet envoy Tony Blair.

Israel (Gilad Cohen):

-- UNSC cannot be oblivious to suffering in Sderot. Israel will protect itself. 7000 rockets fired into southern Israel since since 2000. 150 percent increase in rocket attacks since Hamas coup in June 2007.

-- No equivalence between Palestinian terror targeting civilians and Israeli response.

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-- If the Palestinians continue to choose Hamas, it will lead to more suffering.

15. (U) COUNCIL MEMBERS (in speaking order):

Italy:

-- Concerned about Israeli electricity cuts and reduction in humanitarian supplies.

-- Call on all parties to cease military action.

Burkina Faso:

-- Gaza situation exacerbated by &Draconian8 Israeli measures. Blockade is unacceptable.

-- Israeli actions are a response to rocket fire from Gaza.

UK:

-- Israel has a right to self-defense, but Israel cannot carry out actions designed to cause human suffering. UK does not accept the closure of Gaza and calls on Israel to re-open the crossings.

-- UNSC should play its role. Rocket attacks are unacceptable and casualties caused by IDF actions are unacceptable. Actions by both sides are counter-productive in search for peace.

South Africa:

-- Rocket attacks must stop immediately but entire Gaza population should not be punished as a result.

-- UNSC should call on Israel to permanently lift the blockade and keep the crossings open. Collective punishment unacceptable.

-- Israel is still effectively occupying Gaza and is therefore bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Russia:

-- Condemn rocket attacks but concerned about IDF reprisals that kill civilians.

-- Important for UNSC to react. Economic restrictions should be lifted immediately but &terrorist8 activities must also stop.

Indonesia:

-- Israel should lift the blockade immediately.

-- All parties should exercise restraint.

France:

-- Condemn violence in all forms and call for cease-fire. Right to self-defense should not be exercised indiscriminately.

-- Greatly regret Israeli decision to impose blockade and cut off fuel. Call for restoration of basic humanitarian services.

Costa Rica:

-- Endorse SYG statement regretting closure and rocket attacks. But collective punishment cannot be justified even by rocket attacks.

-- UNSC should send a message to Israel to respect international law and to the PA that it must control its territory.

Panama:

-- Rocket attacks are indefensible but Israeli response should be proportionate. Even in war, civilians cannot be deprived of basic supplies.

-- UNSC should call for a cease-fire. Prefer a UNSC statement today (January 22) because the world will notice if the SC is silent.

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Croatia:

-- Rocket attacks and closures are both unacceptable.

China:

-- Call on Israel to immediately cease military operations in Gaza, lift closure, and re-open crossing points.

-- International community should ensure Geneva Conventions are respected.

-- UNSC members agree more than they disagree. Impossible to resolve all questions about the Middle East in a PRST but can focus on humanitarian situation.

Belgium:

-- Rocket attacks unacceptable but no justification for blockade of entire civilian population.

Vietnam:

-- Israeli power cuts have created a deplorable situation.

-- But targeting innocent civilians through rocket attacks is

unacceptable.

Libya:

-- Israel seems to be escalating its military activities to derail success of Annapolis. UNSC must stop &genocide8 in Gaza.

-- Israel is punishing Palestinians because they elected Hamas. Israeli actions in Gaza cannot be justified or equated with anything.

16. (U) OTHER STATES

Saudi Arabia (for Arab League):

-- Israeli actions raise doubts about Israeli commitment to Annapolis.

-- Urge an immediate end to siege, embargo, and opening of border crossings.

-- Call for international inquiry into &war crimes8 in Gaza.

Lebanon:

-- Call on Israel to explain how children killed by IDF (list of children's names read out loud) fit into the category of &terrorists.8

-- Israel is practicing collective punishment and committing war crimes.

-- Although Israel has withdrawn from Gaza, it controls all crossings and therefore is still the effective occupier.

Syria:

-- Israeli claim of withdrawal from Gaza is blatantly false as it still controls all its borders.

-- Israel is a &terrorist entity8 which has killed eight times more people than Palestinian &resistance8 groups.

-- Rocket attacks are a reaction to IDF assassinations of Palestinian leaders.

-- Israel could not act as it does without support of &influential states.8

Jordan:

-- Israel should facilitate Jordanian humanitarian relief to Gaza.

-- UNSC should put an end to humanitarian tragedy including by ending all military activities and lifting the siege and closure.

Egypt:

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-- Israeli policies violate international law and constitute collective punishment.

-- Egypt fully rejects launching of rockets from Gaza into Israel.

-- Egypt has worked with Israel to resolve situation. Quartet and the UNSC must fulfill their responsibilities.
KHALILZAD